

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6095

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 6079

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PE
SUBJECT: MILITANT TEACHERS UNION OVERWHELMING OPPOSITION IN
COOPERATIVE ELECTION

1. TEACHERS WENT TO POLLS JULY 18 TO ELECT NEW DIRECTORS FOR
TEACHERS COOPERATIVES THROUGHOUT PERU. REPRODUCTION OF PRE-
ELECTION PUBLICITY WAS DISSEMINATED BY GOVERNMENT-ORIENTED TEACHERS
UNION SERP. COMMUNIST UNION FENEP AND MILITANT FAR
LEFT SUTEP ALSO WERE ABLE TO CAMPAIGN PUBLICLY. PRE-ELECTION
PRESS COVERAGE STRESSED IRREGULARITIES AND FINANCIAL MISMAN-
AGEMENT IN TEACHER COOPERATIVES UNDER SUTEP LEADERSHIP.

2. ELECTION RESULTS IN LIMA WERE SUTEP 18,913 VOTES; SERP,
3,128 AND FENEP 985. NATIONWIDE SUTEP CLAIMED, PROBABLY CORRECTLY
SINCE PRESS CARRIED TOTALS WITHOUT COMMENT, TO HAVE WON WITH
93 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. ON JULY 23 GOP UNION SERP CHALLENGED
ELECTION RESULTS, CHARGING SUTEP WITH VIOLATION OF ELECTORAL
PROCEDURES. NO GOP ACTION TAKEN TO DATE.

3. COMMENT: ELECTION IN TEACHER COOPERATIVES IS ONE OF FEW ELECTORAL
POLITICAL WEATHERVANES AVAILABLE IN PERU. SMASHING SUTEP
VICTORY DEMONSTRATES THAT GOP HAS LITTLE SUPPORT AMONG OVER
100,000 TEACHERS WHO, LIKE REST OF URBAN LOWER-MIDDLE CLASS, AD-
VERSELY AFFECTED BY INFLATION AND UNINSPIRED BY REVOLUTIONARY
RHETORIC OR ACTION IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR. ELECTION ALSO DEMON-
STRATES TOTAL LACK OF MOSCOW-LINE COMMUNIST PARTY INFLUENCE AMONG
TEACHERS. LESS CLEAR IS THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF FAR LEFT AND
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APRA FACTIONS AMONG THEM. UNION LEADERSHIP IS MILITANT FAR

LEFT AND CLAIMS TO BE MAOIST OR TROTSEYKITE IN POLITICAL ORIENTATION.
APRA CONSISTENTLY LOSES TESTS OF STRENGTH WITHIN UNION. YET MANY
TEACHERS UNDOUBTEDLY SUPPORT LEADERSHIP, NOT FOR ITS
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY, BUT BECAUSE LEADERS PROMISE GREATER BENEFITS,
ARE ANTI-GOVERNMENT, AND ARE WILLING, UP TO APOINT, TO CONFRONT
GOP IN DEFENSE OF TEACHERS WAGE AND BENEFIT DEMANDS. IN
SOME AREAS, TRUJILLO APRA RAN OWN SLATE OF CANDIDATES (SUTEP
MINORITY) AND CLAIMS TO HAVE WON 6 OF 13 POSITIONS, WITH
FAR LEFT WINNING 7.

4. GOP REACTION IN FACE OF SUTEP VICTORY UNCERTAIN. UNION HAS
BEEN CALLING FOR 100 PERCENT ACROSS-THE-BOARD WAGE INCREASES AND HAS
JOINED WITH FAR LEFT CAMPESINO LED CCP AND MILITATN MINERS UNIONS
IN DENOUNCING GOP ECONOMIC POLICY. IF GOP PERCEIVES SIGNIFICANT
THREAT ON LEFT IT MAY MOVE AGAINST UNION USING PRETEXT OF SUTEP
MISUSE OF COOPERATIVE FUNDS.

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